

May 25, 2006

Dear Community Friends –



### **Marijuana Grow Operations**

In the last seven months, the South Precinct Anti-Crime Team has served 12 marijuana grow operation search warrants in Southeast Seattle. Locations of these marijuana grow farms have been in the Rainier Beach, South Beacon Hill, Columbia City and Cheasty Blvd areas. The street value of the seized marijuana: **\$11,000,000.00**. Yes, \$11 million.

Regardless of how you feel about marijuana, marijuana grow operations are not benign. They have negative impacts on the areas in which they operate. We know there are many more out there. You can help us find, identify and remove them and the adverse impact they cause in our communities.

### **Grow Operation Characteristics**

- Grow operations are usually rental properties. They may be in clusters, with 3-4 grow farms operated by the same people within a short distance of each other, often in the same general neighborhood.
- The property owner/renter is most likely absent. Most grow operators do not live in the home where the grow operation is located. You are not going to see a lot of activity at the house. Someone will show up periodically for short amounts of time to tend the marijuana, but then they will leave. They do not stay long and you'll rarely see them bring in groceries or other personal supplies. This is not a universal rule, however: there have been times when the people have lived in the same location as the grow farm.
- Growers often steal electricity by diverting the power at the meter.
- The grow operations use an inordinate amount of electricity for lights, heaters and fans. Monthly electric bills that reach into the thousands of dollars are not uncommon and a good indicator of a

grow operation.

- Usually the entire crop is harvested all at once. Whereas you may have only seen one person enter the house for short periods of time, at harvest time there will be multiple people and multiple vehicles and it will be the only time they are seen at that location.
- Loading/unloading of equipment and plants is most likely done late at night.

### **Telltale Signs of a Grow Operation**

Here are some of the signs that we look for:

- *Odor of Marijuana:* Pungent earthy herbal or skunk-like odor, usually in the late evening or early morning. Indoor marijuana grow farms need to be vented and this is usually done late night/early morning hours vs. midday so as to not attract attention.
- *Condensation on the windows.*
- *Covered windows from the inside.* Usually covered with regular blinds or curtains where false walls are created on the inside. In this case the blinds/curtains never open.
- *Sound of venting fans.*
- *Lights appear as if they are on timers (coming on the same time everyday):* growers making the house appear lived in.

### **What We Need From You**

If any of the above describes a home in your neighborhood, take another *closer* look. The signs are not limited to the above indicators and not all the telltale signs need to be there for you to report it. **If it's suspicious, report it!** Let us know what activity you see (or odors you smell) and describe your suspicions.

Each precinct's Anti-Crime Team will act on information received regarding marijuana grows in their area. In the South Precinct, call our precinct's Anti-Crime Team at 206-386-1878. You can remain anonymous.

Until Next time, Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon, South Precinct Crime Prevention